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ABSTRACT

This study, undertaken in the summer of 1986, was to develop a comprehensive evaluation and needs assessment for the Alabama Judicial College. Qualitative research techniques (participant observation and in-depth interviewing) were applied to collect the necessary data. Judicial employees were observed in courtroom, office, training and social settings. Judges, secretaries to the judges, court clerks, court reporters, and bailiffs were interviewed. Based on the data collected, a "grounded" evaluation and needs questionnaire was developed. In the process of the study, there was a shift in emphasis from evaluation of past and present programs to perceived future needs. Participants expressed a desire for further education, employee orientations, better relations and coordination with the National Judicial College, and a better way of putting judges into office. The study concluded that the use of qualitiative methods to develop the "grounded" questionnaire was very thorough but time consuming and problematic. A taxonomic diagram of categories of questions with their code abbreviations and a diagram showing the Alabama Judicial System are included. The underlying evaluation questions and sample questions and comments from which they were derived are appended. (JAZ)

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Judging judicial education: A qualitative approach to the development of an evaluation and needs assessment questionnaire

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of the
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Judging judicial education: A qualitative approach to the development of an evaluation and needs assessment questionnaire

by Julia S. Rogers and Gloria A. Turner

"We disappoint fifty percent of those who come before us, and sometimes we can even improve on that batting average!"
...Judge Joseph R. Weisberger,
Associate Justice, Supreme Court of RI

This study was undertaken to develop a comprehensive evaluation and needs assessment for the Alabama Judicial College, using qualitative research techniques described by Bogdan and Biklen (1982) and Spradley (1979, 1980), among others. Research techniques of in-depth interviews and participant observation were used to discover the reactions and perceived needs of court employees for continuing education in Alabama. This led ultimately to the design of a "grounded" evaluation and needs questionnaire based on the perceived needs expressed by court employees, rather than on preconceived ones assumed by the researchers.

This research is part of an evaluation and needs assessment project for the Alabama Judicial College commissioned to the Evaluation and Assessment Laboratory of the College of Education at the University of Alabama by the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts. The researchers are graduate research assistants assigned to the Judicial College project.

Background

Judicial education is a new area in educational research and evaluation. The concept of judicial education grew out of (1) the need for orienting new judges to their jobs, since there is no formal state-level university-based academic program for training judges, and (2) for continuing judicial education to keep judges abreast of new developments in the law. There is a

National Judicial College (NJC), in Reno, Nevada, affiliated with the American Bar Association and located at the University of Nevada Reno, that conducts orientations and special topics training at a national level, and that started this year to offer a masters degree in judicial studies (Judge Colquit, personal communication). A survey of state judicial education in the mid-70s reported 14 states with structured orientation programs and 11 with Judicial Colleges and/or Judicial Conferences. Twenty-five states, in all, reported having some sort of regular, structured programs in judicial education (State Judicial Educators Association, 1978). Since that time, Alabama and some other states have initiated judicial education programs (Administrative Office of the Courts, 1978). A few states (e.g., California, Michigan, Alabama) have fairly elaborate educational programs. Alabama's program is unique in that it is the only one to have as a primary goal "the education of all members of the Judicial System" (Administrative Office of the Courts, 1978), not just judges. Research on and evaluation of these programs offer some interesting challenges to educational researchers.

Although a few states have conducted needs assessments for continuing education for judges and/or court clerks (Alabama Department of Court Management, 1974; National Center for State Courts, 1975; Criminal Courts Technical Assistance Project, 1973, 1974, 1976a, 1976b, 1977, 1979), these have been done as a preliminary to the inauguration of formal, state-wide educational programs. As far as we were able to determine, no state has conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the on-going training as well as an assessment of future needs.

Furthermore, the usual needs assessment, for judicial education as well as in other areas, is designed using questions derived from the ideas and

experiences of those designing the questionnaire, not from the needs of those being surveyed. This could result in omitting unrecognized areas of fruitful inquiry and in questions that may seem irrelevant or ambiguous to the training participant. Blase (1986) used qualitative techniques for developing a questionnaire for studying teacher stress, and the present study adopted some of his techniques for using wide-ranging interviews and observations as a source of questionnaire focus.

Background of the Alabama Judicial College.

The Alabama Judicial College (AJC) was established in 1978, an outgrowth of the creation in 1975 of the Unified Judicial System for the state of Alabama. The Alabama Judicial College (AJC) attempts to address the educational needs of all court employees, and even some personnel in related agencies, providing a much more comprehensive judicial education program than most states.

The AJC is a branch of the Alabama Administrative Office of Courts (AOC). It is not directly affiliated with any law school or other organization, although it was housed from 1979 until early 1986 on the campus of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. The AOC and AJC offices are presently located in Montgomery, Alabama. There is a Director and an Assistant Director of Judicial Education, reporting through the Administrative Director of Courts to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Alabama. There is no regular, permanent faculty for the AJC. Curriculum is determined by the administrative staff and educational advisory committees of each of the affected constituencies. Courses are taught by judges from Alabama, other states, and the Federal Court system; by law school faculty; by professionals from other disciplines (e.g., psychology for judicial stress sessions); and by lawyers.

Alabama Court System.

To facilitate understanding the judicial training needs in Alabama, a judicial organizational chart for Alabama is given in Figure 1. As can be seen from the chart, there are nine Supreme Court Justices and eight appellate judges on the Courts of Civil Appeals and Criminal Appeals. Cases go to the appellate courts through the Circuit Courts, of which there are 39 in the state, with 113 Circuit Judges. Circuits are made up of one or more counties. Circuit Courts are the highest courts of general jurisdiction in the state, and have original jurisdiction in cases involving criminal felonies and civil suits involving more than $5000 and appellate jurisdiction from lower courts. Courts of limited jurisdiction are the District Courts (67 in the state, one per county, with 89 District Judges) which handle misdemeanors, small claims, preliminary hearings in some felony cases, and other civil matters; Probate Courts (68), which handle wills, estates, and guardianships; and Municipal Courts (272, with 218 judges--some preside in more than one town), which handle violations of municipal ordinances in cities choosing to maintain their own courts. In addition, some districts have courts of special jurisdiction for juveniles, domestic relations, and/or family courts. (Administrative Office of Courts, undated.)

Each Circuit Court has a Court Clerk, who is really the administrative officer of the court. A few District Courts also have clerks, and domestics relations courts may also have Registers (who are being phased out). Each judge has a secretary. Some judges also have bailiffs. Some courts have permanent court reporters while others use free-lance reporters. In the larger courts, the clerk will have various other court employees. All of these employees have training needs the AJC addresses.

Background of investigators.

Background and biases of investigators. Both researchers have had experience working in the field of education which allowed us to interact with and easily understand the educational aspects of the Judicial College. However, neither researcher had worked or spent a lot of time in the judicial system. Thus we did not have the preconceived ideas that someone working in the judicial field might have. According to Smith (1967), this could be an advantage because "People living in a well tried situation cannot see what is so fascinating to the newcomer. To them, problems are not [just] foreshadowed, they are resolved issues." (p. 219) Thus, the researchers brought a relatively unbiased perception of inquiry into the study.

Data collection methods

The study used qualitative research methods in which the natural setting is the direct source of data. This provides descriptive data - the subjects' own words as well as observable behaviors - for the purpose of understanding a phenomenon holistically and in context. This was a multiple-site study which sought cross-site comparison without sacrificing within-site understanding (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). The specific methods of data collection used here were participant observation and in-depth interviewing. In participant observation, the researcher enters the world of the people being studied, gets to know them, gains their trust, and systematically keeps a detailed written record of what is heard and observed (Spradley, 1979). In an in-depth interview, the researcher spends a great deal of time with the subject in his own environment, asking open-ended questions such as "what is a typical day like for you?", "can you think of any other kinds of activities you would do as a judge?" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Spradley, 1979). A total of

approximately 76 hours were spent in-depth interviewing and in a limited form of participant observation by the two researchers over a period of eight weeks. Field notes were taken during observations and interviews and recorded in detail after each session.

The study was conducted during the summer of 1986. The initial direction of the research was to be a case study of a relatively new judge, aimed at collecting data that would help describe the judicial needs of new judges in Alabama, as part of the larger effort of the evaluation of the AJC. After much data collection, the rich and fruitful insights gained about new judge orientation through use of qualitative methods caused us to expand the study to investigate the perceived training needs of all judicial employees in Alabama and to investigate their perceptions of the adequacies and inadequacies of the present Alabama Judicial College. The central focus of the study then became to use qualitative techniques to aid in the development of a questionnaire to evaluate past and present judicial education in Alabama and to assess the needs for future cost-effective training. This guided the direction of our efforts while conducting the study. We were constantly asking, "what are the underlying questions that the AOC staff and educational advisory committees need answered in order to maximize the benefits of the program?" This led to the additional questions of "what are the job requirements that should guide training efforts?", "how well has the Judicial College met the needs of the personnel it serves?", "what are the strengths and weaknesses of the Judicial College?", "what suggestions are there for future Judicial College training sessions?", and finally, "what specific questions should be on the questionnaire?" Thus this study was following at least one of the guidelines for qualitative research. "Such research begins

with questions rather than hypotheses." (Blase, 1986, p.16)

Data were collected in several ways. Judicial employees were observed in courtroom, office, training, and social settings. Some of the observations were conducted jointly by both researchers and some were conducted separately. During some of the initial observations (open courtroom and general training sessions), the subjects were unaware of the presence and purpose of the researchers. During most of the study, however, subjects were aware of the researchers' presence and purpose. We spent 6 1/2 hours observing actual court proceedings, observing the court employees and their interactions within the daily operation of the court. Three hours were spent observing in one judge's office, noting the interaction among the judge, the secretary, and the bailiff.

Interviews were used extensively in the study, some conducted jointly by both researchers and some separately. Interviews were conducted with the following court employees: judges (both district and circuit), secretaries to judges, court clerks, court reporters, and bailiffs. In some cases, the person being interviewed had been contacted by the AOC explaining the purpose of the interview prior to the first contact made by the researchers. This helped us to gain access easily to key people within the court system. Even where AOC contact had not been made, interviewees were very cooperative. We spent 6 hours (jointly) in intensive interviews with one relatively new judge, exploring her perceptions of the benefits of the Judicial College for new judges and exploring her perceptions of the needs of a new judge. In addition, we spent 4 hours jointly interviewing personnel of the AOC. One of us spent five additional hours interviewing other members of the AOC and the dean of the law school at the University of Alabama. One and one-half hours

were spent jointly interviewing a judge with extensive background with the NJC, and 4 1/2 additional hours were spent individually interviewing other judges and other court employees. Some interviews were conducted via the telephone due to the long distances that would have been required to travel in order to talk to some of the court employees. Approximately 22 people were interviewed formally, and dozens more contributed brief comments and suggestions informally. Some were interviewed on more than one occasion. Follow-up contacts were made if the researchers had questions after the initial interview.

Both researchers attended the Alabama Judicial College's annual two-day conference for circuit and district judges, each spending 18 hours in observations of the conference workshop sessions and in informal discussions with judges and AOC staff attending the conference. Many of the informal interviews mentioned above were conducted between workshop sessions, at mealtime, and at social gatherings.

Analysis techniques

After several of the major interviews and 4 or 5 hours of observation were completed, coding and domain analysis were begun. Basically two preliminary divisions were identified at this time: (1) questions relating to evaluation of past and existing programs, and (2) questions relating to perceived needs. One of the more extensive interviews was taken as a starting point and codes were allowed to emerge from the data. Each idea that seemed to reflect a different aspect of training perceptions and needs was given a different code. By the time we were through coding about one and one-half interviews, it was obvious that we were getting many repeats and very few new codes. We then decided to try using the method of constant-comparative

analysis to do the remainder of the coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Parker & Gehrke, 1986).

The constant comparative analysis technique, called "joint coding and analysis" by Glaser & Strauss (1967), allows you to do simultaneous coding and construction of categories. The categories are generated by the data themselves, based on perceived similarities and differences in the data (Parker & Gehrke, 1986). The comments of the first interviewee were read and categorized. The second set of interview notes were then coded by the categories generated in the first set, and the data within each category were compared between protocols. We then applied these emerging categories to every other set of notes, constantly comparing, refining, and expanding the categories. These categories represent the underlying questions which need to be answered for the evaluation and needs assessment of judicial education.

We decided to try to use the computer in implementing the constant-comparative method. Codes were entered according to type of question, the relevant group of judicial employees, and the source from which the question originated. The computer proved very effective for sorting the questions in search of emerging categories.

As coding progressed, categories of codes were becoming more obvious. Since most of the question types originally categorized under evaluation of past and present programs and perceived needs overlapped extensively, the categories were rearranged into a mini-taxonomy of underlying question types, with the following new divisions: (1) process, (2) content, and (3) outcomes, each with appropriate subdivisions. Once again the computer proved to be effective in the rearrangement of data, merging the data from the first coded protocols into the new taxonomy.

Results

A taxonomic diagram of question categories and their code abbreviations is given in Figure 2. The three major divisions are subdivided into categories of question types. Each of the subcategories are further divided into (a) evaluation of past and present programs, and (b) perceived needs. For each coded area there is a list of the underlying questions for a given category, reflecting the list of concerns which we identified within a category. A sample page of these underlying questions for the category called "Process/Methodology of Training" is given in Figure 3. The coded comments below the set of underlying questions represent a sample of the specific questions posed in the protocols from which the underlying questions were generated. (A complete set of underlying questions and coded comments is available on request.)

One unanticipated outcome generated by the qualitative research methods was the shift in emphasis from evaluation of past and present programs (which we originally thought was the major question) to perceived future needs (which is what the interviews clearly focused our attention on). What started as primarily an evaluation project emerged into primarily a needs assessment.

The set of underlying questions is presently being used to generate the questionnaires to be sent to court employees. We would never have thought of asking about some of the topics that emerged from the data (e.g., "what are the 'mickey-mouse' things about the program?") without using these qualitative methods.

In addition to the underlying questions that emerged from the interviews and observations that will direct the questionnaire development, there were other findings that will be useful in the overall evaluation and needs

assessment project. Among these are the expressed desire among judges for some kind of a judicial degree program in the state; the desire to place extremely high priority on judicial education in spite of budget cuts; proposed mentorship programs for new judges and other judicial employees; ideas for the training of bailiffs, who are not now trained, and possibly even the organization of a bailiffs' association; the avalanche of unsolicited positive comments and overwhelmingly favorable statements about how good Alabama's Judicial College is in comparison to others, almost to the point of obviating the need for any other evaluation of past and present programs (though not for looking to the future); the need for better relations and coordination with the NJC; preeminence of new employee orientations ("If they've got to cut everything else, they still need to keep the new judge orientation"); and a concern about a better way of putting judges into office than the present election system (for those who are opposed in an election, there is considerable stress and disruption of court activities, and even interference with attendance at judicial training sessions).

Evaluation of qualitative technique

The use of qualitative methods of data analysis as a means of developing a "grounded" questionnaire is very thorough but time-consuming. It has the potential to be worthwhile if you are trying to develop a theory based upon your questionnaire data, as Blase did (Blase, 1986). However, the extensive use of this method simply for the development of a questionnaire for data-gathering is problematic, since the benefits gained <u>may</u> not be worth the extra time. On the other hand, if quantitative results are not essential, it is possible that the results of the intensive interviews would yield effectively as reliable results as a questionnaire would, and thus it might be sufficient

to do the qualitative interviews alone since a by-product of qualitative techniques is that you may well get some unanticipated insights that would be missed in typical questionnaire studies. We think, in our research project, that the results gained with qualitative techniques were worth the effort (but would have been more cost-effective if we had been more experienced at doing qualitative research).

Suggestions for further research.

The questionnaire itself is presently under development and the survey will be conducted and results analyzed in the next few months.

A number of potential qualitative studies of the judicial system from the court employees point of view are suggested by the data. A more thorough study of the new judge's world and a study of judicial stress look particularly promising. Studying the effect of demeanor and judicial "rituals" on the public's respect for judges has also been suggested. A study of judicial language (called "terms of art") of the court system could be fascinating. The experiences of women judges also could constitute an interesting study.

A thorough study of other judicial education programs is suggested. There has apparently been no recent documentation of the changes that have occurred in judicial education throughout the U.S. since the 1978 study reported in the introduction.

Another area for research could be the comparison of the results of a qualitative study with a corresponding quantitative study on the same topic. For example, a qualitative analysis of the data collected to date on this project could be compared with the data that will be collected via the questionnaire to see how closely the conclusions from the quantitative study

could be predicted from the qualitative analysis.

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CREDITS

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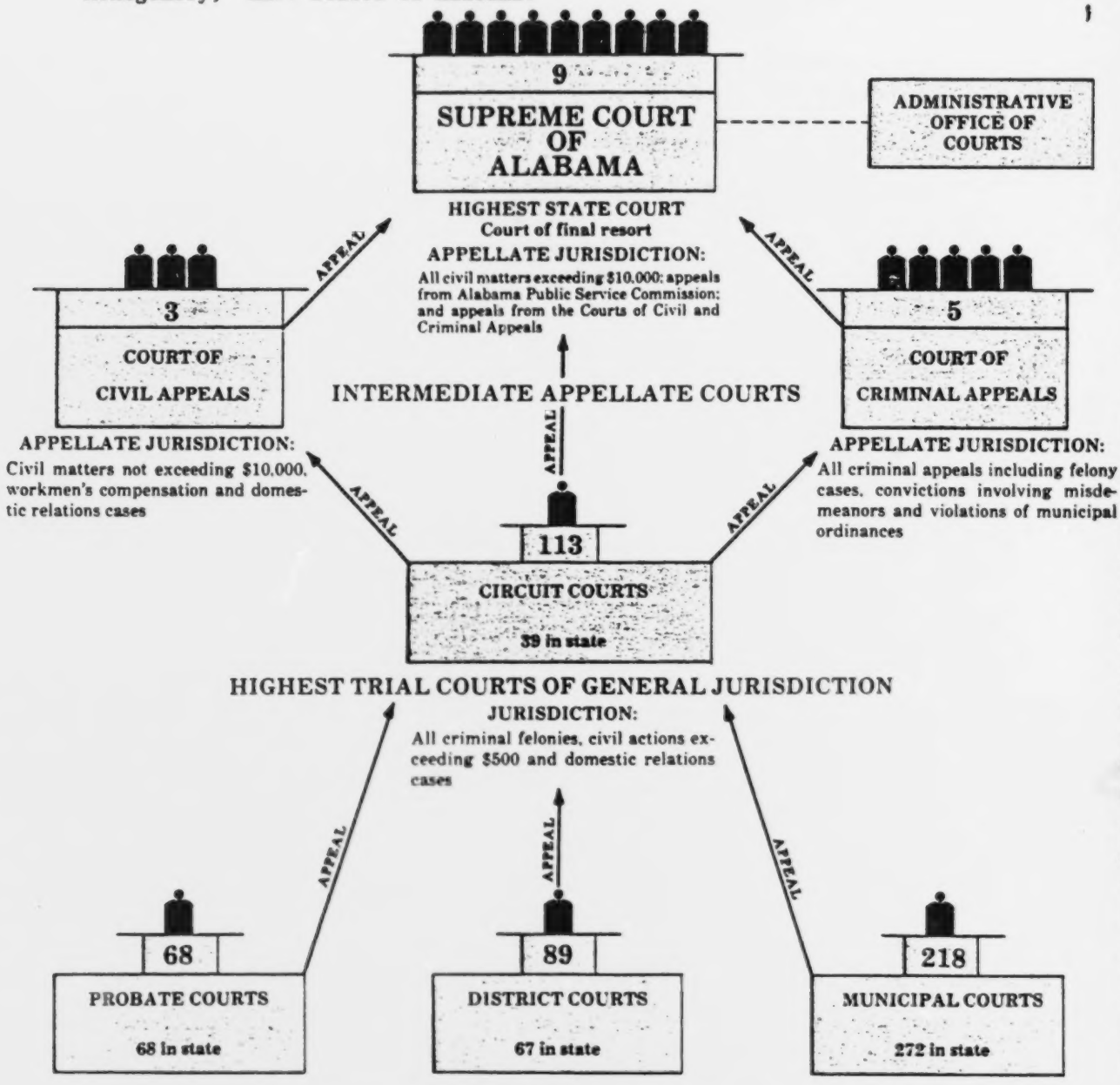
Figure 1

ALABAMA JUDICIAL SYSTEM

From: Administrative Office of Courts. (undated). Guide to Alabama court procedures. Montgomery, AL.: Statoe of Alabama.

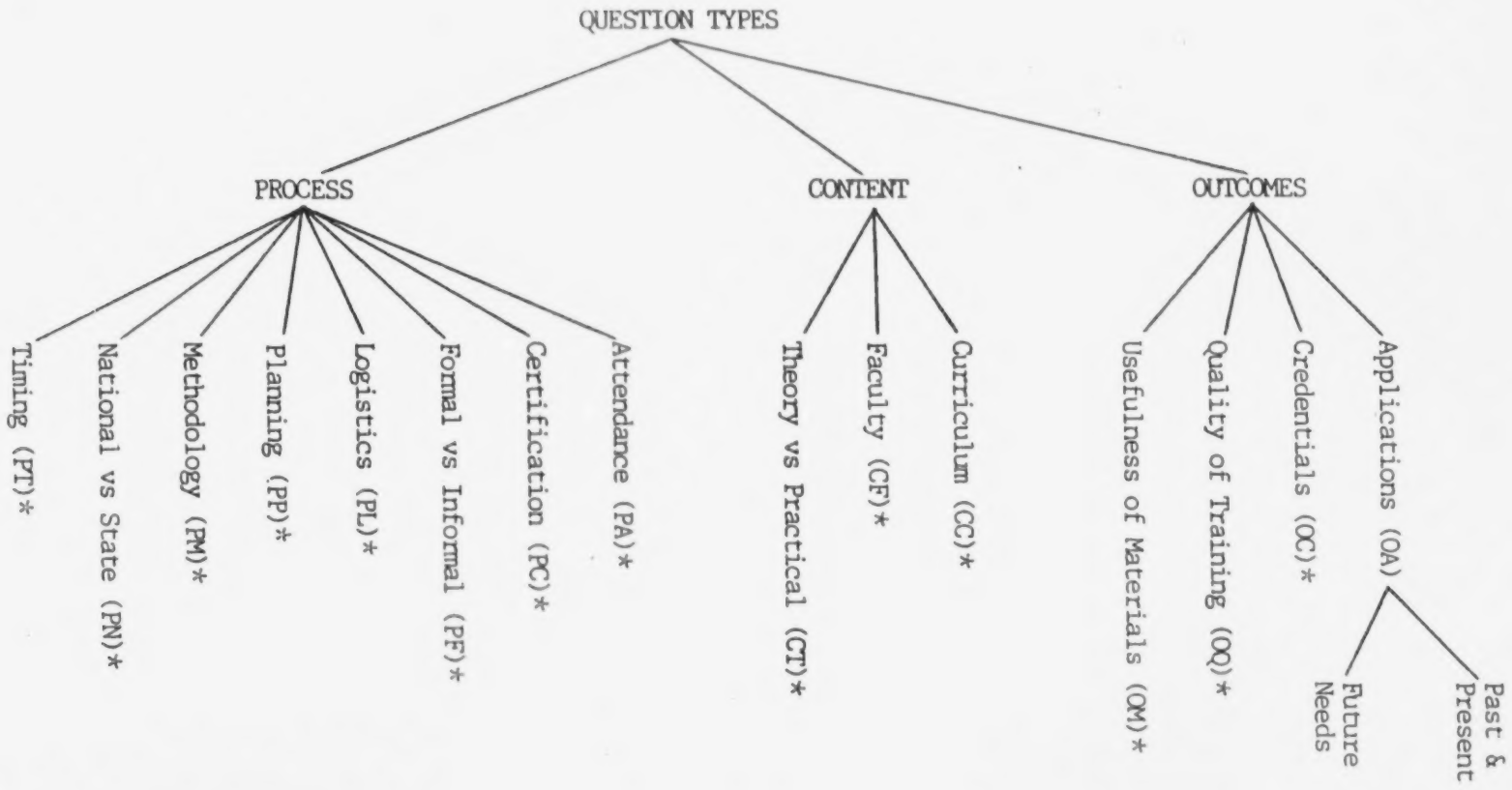

9
SUPREME COURT OF ALABAMA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS
HIGHEST STATE COURT
Court of final resort
APPELLATE JURISDICTION:
All civil matters exceeding $10,000; appeals from Alabama Public Service Commission; and appeals from the Courts of Civil and Criminal Appeals
APPEAL
APPEAL
3
COURT OF CIVIL APPEALS
5
COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS
INTERMEDIATE APPELLATE COURTS
APPELLATE JURISDICTION:
Civil matters not exceeding $10,000, workmen's compensation and domestic relations cases
APPELLATE JURISDICTION:
All criminal appeals including felony cases, convictions involving misdemeanors and violations of municipal ordinances
APPEAL
APPEAL
APPEAL
113
CIRCUIT COURTS
39 in state
HIGHEST TRIAL COURTS OF GENERAL JURISDICTION
JURISDICTION:
All criminal felonies, civil actions exceeding $500 and domestic relations cases
APPEAL
APPEAL
APPEAL
68
PROBATE COURTS
68 in state
89
DISTRICT COURTS
67 in state
218
MUNICIPAL COURTS
272 in state
COURTS OF LIMITED JURISDICTION*
JURISDICTION:
Special court which handles wills, administration of estates, guardianship of minors and incompetents
JURISDICTION:
Misdemeanors and Small Claims actions; concurrent jurisdiction with Circuit Court in civil matters not exceeding $5,000
JURISDICTION:
Violations of municipal ordinances are heard by municipal judges in municipalities that choose to maintain their municipal courts. (Otherwise, these cases are tried in district court.)

* Appeals from courts of limited jurisdiction go to circuit court for trial de novo (a new trial). Other appeals may go to the appropriate appellate court if there is an adequate record from the lower court and only when questions of law are involved in such an appeal.

Figure 2

TAXONOMIC DIAGRAM

OF QUESTION TYPES FOR QUESTIONNAIRE



*Breaks down into Past & Present and Future Needs as shown for Applications (OA)

Figure 3

PT = PROCESS/TIMING WITHIN CAREER

How do educational needs change as person gains experience?
Do secretaries need continuing educational programs, or only a "new secretary" orientation?
When during the first year should a new judge attend the new judge orientation program? (Alabama, National)
Compare the benefits of the Alabama and the National new judge orientations. Are both needed? What sequence? When?
Is the new clerk orientation effective and timely?
Is a "new _____" orientation needed for any other jobs?
Would a "mentor" program for new judges be desirable? How long? What type judge should be assigned as mentor?
Should new judges get priority in training? Other "new" employees?

n pt fg Should a new judge attend both the National Judicial College and the Alabama Judicial College New Judge Orientations? When and in what order?

n pt fg When in the term of a judge should the judge be sent to the National Judicial College New Judge Orientation?

n pt jc Should new judges get priority in training (in-state, out-of-state)?

(Only a few of the coded items are included)

ALABAMA JUDICIAL COLLEGE

EVALUATION STUDY

UNDERLYING QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED
and
SAMPLE QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM WHICH UNDERLYING QUESTIONS WERE DERIVED

Julia S. Rogers
and
Gloria A. Turner

AJC QUESTIONNAIRE
PRELIMINARY DATA ANALYSIS CODES
7/30/1986

FIELD 1 -- SUBJECT OF QUESTION [Use as code for major headings]

PA = PROCESS/ATTENDANCE
PC = PROCESS/CERTIFICATION, DEGREE, MANDITORY
PF = PROCESS/FORMAL VS INFORMAL
PL = PROCESS/LOGISTICS (COST, LOCATION, TIME, DURATION, REIMB)
PM = PROCESS/METHODOLOGY OF TRAINING
PN = PROCESS/NATIONAL VS STATE ETC
PT = PROCESS/TIMING WITHIN CAREER

CA = CONTENT/AL VS FEDERAL
CC = CONTENT/CURRICULUM
CF = CONTENT/FACULTY
CT = CONTENT/THEORY VS PRACTICAL

OA = OUTCOMES/APPLICATIONS
OC = OUTCOMES/CREDENTIALS
OQ = OUTCOMES/QUALITY OF TRAINING
OM = OUTCOMES/USEFULNESS OF MATERIALS

SO = SUGGESTIONS - OPENENDED

FIELD 2 -- TARGET GROUP [Code in first column of "sample questions"]

j = JUDGE
c = CLERK/REGIST.
r = REPORTER
s = SECRETARY
n = NEW JUDGE
a = ALL

o = OTHER
    m = MUNICIPAL
    e = EMPLOYEES OF COURT CLERK
    b = BAILIFF
    d = DUI INSTRUCTOR

FIELD 3 -- SAME AS FIELD 1, EXCEPT USE LOWER CASE
[Code in second column of "sample questions--Used for original sort]

FIELD 4 -- CODE DESIGNATION FOR PERSON MAKING COMMENT OR SUGGESTION
[Code in third column of "sample questions--Key not included here to protect confidentiality of interviewees]

AJC QUESTIONNAIRE

UNDERLYING QUESTIONS

PA = PROCESS/ATTENDANCE

What have been the patterns of attendance at AJC program over the years?
For those personnel who do not attend regularly (or at all), Why?
For those personnel who used to attend but don't any more, Why?
For those personnel who have increased their attendance, what has attracted them?
What proportion come to educational programs but do not attend most (or maybe any!) sessions? Is there any way to enforce attendance without offending everyone? Could reimbursement be subject to verification of attendance of individual programs?

Sample Questions

a pa at What percent of the Alabama Judicial College programs have you attended while in your present position?

a pa at If your pattern of attendance has changed, please indicate why.

a pa at Has your pattern of attendance increased, decreased or remained unchanged?

.....

PC = PROCESS/CERTIFICATION, DEGREE, MANDATORY

Should attendence be mandatory (more than it already is)?
Should only part be mandatory? Which ones, or what percent?
If mandatory, how could this be enforced? What sanctions?
How are judges reacting to the 100-hour certificate program?
Should there be an extension of this program to 200-hour, 500-hour, etc?
What about "add-on" certificates"
Do judges know the extent to which teaching of courses and courses taken at the NJC and through the bar can count (or not count) toward certification, and why? Do they think these credit allowances are appropriate, and if not, how should they be changed?
Should there be certificate programs for other court positions?
Should there be a judicial studies degree program for Alabama judges? If so, should it be coordinated with the NJC? Should it be offered as a law school (UA or Cumberland?) degree, or independently by AJC? How involved should the law school be in determining curriculum?
Do you certify attendance or proficiency?
Should NJC new judge orientation be necessary for new judges during their first year? Should this be subsidized by AJC?
Should judges be encouraged to participate in the masters' degree program of NJC? How? How does this relate to possible in-state degree program?

Sample Questions (PC)

a	pc	at	Should positive or negative sanctions be imposed for non-attendance and attendance at judicial workshops?
a	pc	at	Should attendance at judicial workshops be mandatory?
a	pc	at	If attendance at all workshops is not mandatory, which ones, if any, should be mandatory?
j	pc	tb	Would you be interested in a degree program for judicial studies if one were available in Alabama? coordinated with NJC offered through UA law school offered through Cumberland coordinated with all the above free-standing (i.e. through AJC only)
n	pc	jc	Should the NCJ program for new judges be mandatory for them in the first year? Should this be subsidized (fully or partially?) by AJC?
j	pc	jc	Should, and if so how, judges be encouraged to participate in the NJC masters degree program? (relate to in-state masters)

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PF = PROCESS/FORMAL VS INFORMAL

How well balanced are the formal and informal aspects of the programs?
What do the judges consider to be the main value of the conferences--the formal or the informal aspects?
Why do they find the informal aspects valuable?
Are there enough "social" events at the programs? Too many? For those who don't attend social events, why?
What percent of time should be spent in "informal" time vs formally scheduled programs?

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PP = PROCESS/ PLANNING AND GOALS

What are the 3 best things about the AJC?
What are the 3 weakest (worst) things about the AJC?
What is "mickey-mouseness" about the program as it now exists?
Should we ask about the workings within educatinal committees themselves?
Who should be on the educatinal committee; how should they be selected; how long should they serve; have they done a good job in the past?
Should AJC adopt policies and goals, including those relating to mandatory attendance, requirements for new judge training, priorities, support for out-of-state educational programs, etc.
Should Alabama subscribe to the American Bar Association "standards for judicial education?"

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PL = PROCESS/LOGISTICS (COST, LOCATION, TIME, DURATION, REIMB)

Does cost ever prohibit attendance?
Would personnel be willing/able to bear more of the cost of the training in order to continue it during financial "crisis"?
Do personnel prefer 1-day, 2-day, 3-day, or longer sessions, or a mixture of these? What mix? [This question will vary with employee category.]
Are there any times during the year when training might be preferable over the times now used? Are there any now used that are undesirable?
Is bringing spouse and/or children an important consideration?
Are the procedures for reimbursement reasonable? Any suggestions?
Does the advanced notification provided by the calendar of events help in planning for attendance? Any suggestions for notification?
What are preferences on location for training? More/less at law school location? More/less at resort-type setting? More/less at non-resort hotels? Prefer present mix? Prefer mix, but different mix than now?
Are there any specific locations that are preferred or disliked? Should meetings be in center of state or spread around?
Would it be desirable to have one session (or more) a year where all court employees were trained at same time and location, with some joint and some specific sessions? What about specific combinations of subgroups?
How would personnel react to in-state regional, 1-day meetings, perhaps once a month? (Probably this applies mainly to judges, but??)
Would judges like to have a Southeastern judges training meeting in Alabama, inviting judges from other states?
Should meeting and housing be separate? (TB--most cost effective programs arte those held at University!--housing is separate
Should plans be made to have a workshop that continues over a period of years?
Would you like the same program to be offered twice at different time slots? (judge, secretary, or all)
Are there too few or too many programs?
Should some programs be divided by size of county, rural vs urban, etc.

Sample Questions (PL)

a pl at Would you be interested in one day regional meetings within the state?

a pl fg How do the following factors affect your attendance at the AJC:

	none	little	much
cost			
geographic location			
reinbursement			
time of year			
duration			
notification			

a pl jr What is your preference among the following locations:
prefer resorts
prefer college campus
prefer non-resort hotels

a pl jr What is your preference among the following locations:
prefer all centrally located
prefer alternating geographic areas

c pl lh Divide sessions by size of county, rural vs urban, etc.

r pl fl Divide sessions by size of county, rural vs urban, traveling reporters, etc.

s pl dm Divide sessions by size of county, rural vs urban, etc.

c pl lh What is the best time of week/day/location?

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PM = PROCESS/METHODOLOGY OF TRAINING

Of the techniques used in prensenting educational material at AJC conferences, which have you found to be the most effective?

What new modes of presentation would you like to see tried (e.g., audio tapes for home use; video tape presentations either for home use or at conferences; round table discussions; short programs on substantive issues at the state level; additional bench manuals--specify; how-to booklets; computer assisted learning; correspondence courses; etc.)

Would it be helpful to have audio- or visual recordings of the sessions of the conferences for later use? (to view a missed session or review details)

Should there be a mentorship program for new judges (and/or other court employees)? How should it be organized?

Sample Questions (PM)

a	pm	at	Would you be interested in courses/training offered through any of the following: audio tapes video tapes how-to booklets panel discussions
a	pm	at	Would you be interested in correspondence (reading) courses?
n	pm	tb	Should new judges be assigned an experienced judge as a "mentor"?
n	pm	fg	Should new judges be assigned an experienced judge as a "mentor"?
b	pm	bm	Should bailiffs be assigned an experienced bailiff as a "mentor"?

PN = PROCESS/NATIONAL VS STATE ETC

For those who have attended programs at NJC, what have been the benefits compared to state programs?
Should there be more opportunities for subsidized travel to NJC programs?
Which NJC programs have been of most benefit?
Are there any NJC programs that should be mandatory for all judges to attend?
How often should a judge attend NJC programs?
Should there be differences in the curriculum offered by AJC and NJC? What differences?
Should there be a specific part of the AJC budget allocated for subsidy of attendance at NJC programs?
How should AJC and NJC programs be coordinated--or should they?
How could/does AJC benefit from judges attending NCJ? Are reports given, or should they be? Are returnees used as faculty for AJC programs?

n	pn	fg	Compare the relative merits of the National Judicial New Judge Orientation and the Alabama Judicial New Judge Orientation?
j	pn	jc	After you have attended an NJC program, do you file a report with AOC or AJC evaluating the program?
j	pn	jc	Do you think the training by AJC and NJC should be more thoroughly coordinated?
j	pn	jc	Should there be a budget for out-of-state education (NJC, etc.)?

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PT = PROCESS/TIMING WITHIN CAREER

How do educational needs change as person gains experience?
Do secretaries need continuing educational programs, or only a "new secretary" orientation?
When during the first year should a new judge attend the new judge orientation program? (Alabama, National)
Compare the benefits of the Alabama and the National new judge orientations. Are both needed? What sequence? When?
Is the new clerk orientation effective and timely?
Is a "new _____" orientation needed for any other jobs?
Would a "mentor" program for new judges be desirable? How long? What type judge should be assigned as mentor?
Should new judges get priority in training? Other "new" employees?

n	pt	fg	Should a new judge attend both the National Judicial College and the Alabama Judicial College New Judge Orientations? When and in what order?
n	pt	fg	When in the term of a judge should the judge be sent to the National Judicial College New Judge Orientation?
n	pt	jc	Should new judges get priority in training (in-state, out-of-state)?

CC = CONTENT/CURRICULUM

Should there be a "Core Curriculum" for each court position, which each person should have to complete to receive a "certificate"? What should this consist of ("What should every _____ be educated in?") Should there be a core also during every following year, or 2, 3, or 4 year cycle, in which refreshers are required?

How is the "in-depthness" of the program? The timeliness?

How should the curriculum planning be done? i.e. use educational committees as presently done or give suggestions for other governance methods

Should there be an academic person on the educational committee charged with curriculum planning?

What method could be used to get input from participants concerning topics? e.g. ask for suggestions on evaluation forms

How have the amounts of training on the previous topics been?

Do we have too many educational programs?

Are the educational programs too long or too short?

Is the bring-your-own-problem session beneficial?

Should the same session be repeated during a conference at different time slots or perhaps audio- or video-taped for later?

Do reporters need additional programs on specific terminology used in the court room?

What do court clerks and judges feel that court employees need to be trained on and when do they need it?

Are there additional court personnel that should be educated by AJC for which there are presently no educational programs provided?

Are additional programs needed for DAs, municipal judges, police, etc.?

What kind of training do bailiffs need, if any? orientation? annual conference? Could this be combined in some way with secretaries' training?

Are there any positions in which training on procedures or information specific to the local area are needed (e.g., reporters, circuit judges)

What do people in each position need in the way of training? When?***

*** Note lists of specific topics in questions below

Sample Questions

j cc at What suggestions do you have regarding the training by AJC of your court employees?

a cc at How should decisions be made concerning the content of AJC?

c cc at What suggestions do you have regarding the training by AJC of your court employees?

c cc tb What does a person in your position need in the way of training?

c cc tb When does a person in your position need training?

b cc bm Should bailiffs have a conference annually (or more often)?

b cc bm Should there be a "new bailiff's orientation"? How long? What topics? Could this be combined with secretaries orientation?

s cc ls Should secretraies have an orientation session for new secretaries?

j cc fg How have the amounts of training on the following topics been?

	not enough	about right	too much
evidence			
recent federal supreme court decisions			
recent Alabama supreme court decisions			
new legislative acts			
case management			
jury management			
ethics			
demeanor			
administrative duties			
court procedures			
stress management			
time management			
judicial writing			
restitution			
paper flow			
child support procedures			
UTC ?			
community relations			

n cc bm Potential topics for new judge orientation:
- evictions
- setting of bonds (politics of it, community attitudes)
- small claims, especially when one side does not have an attorney
- rules of evidence
- small claims (handling of objections)
- sentencing
- equity

b cc bm Potential topics for bailiffs:
- reference hearings on child support (new procedures)
- basic course in court system (orientation)
- handling files
- how to stop someone if they run
- police academy training
- sizing up a prisoner
- handling prisoners
- how to "read a file"
- how many times can a case be continued?
- calling the docket
- court terminology (DPS worker, DV, DC, DA, felony, misdemeanor)
- traffic--how a trooper writes a ticket
- how clerk sets court dates
- assisting clerk with small claims, default judgment collections (counseling people about how to handle--has to spend time with them anyhow)
- handling family disputes
- how to fill in for secretary when she's gone

s cc dm Potential topics for secretaries:
legal terminology
procedures
dealing with people
standardized forms
how to use law books
duties of sheriff and DA and interactions with them
how a case gets from district to circuit court
stress (call it something else)
duties of bailiff (how to fill in for, etc.)

r cc fl Potential topics for reporters:
terminology
format of transcripts
procedures
judicial stress
appeal procedures
process of passing legislation
finind out status of legislation

c cc lh suggest topics for programs

c cc lh what has been most beneficial?

r cc fl Do you need info local to your area?

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CF = CONTENT/FACULTY
Which personnel would like to teach for AJC? (Particularly judges, and particularly for regional within-state programs)
Who are preferred as faculty: out-of-state judges; in-state judges; lawyers; law professors; Dean Gamble; Chief Justice Torbert; other professionals (specify)?
Are judges returning from NJC or other out-of-state programs used as instructors soon after returning? Should they be used more for this?
Should there be a regular "faculty" attached to the AJC, with outside teachers presenting some programs but regular faculty responsible for a "core curriculum" and for coordinating the AJC program?
Would <u>you</u> be willing to serve as faculty for a conference?
Is there enough variety in presenters? Are there any specific people recommended to give presentations?

a cf fg For the most part, who do you prefer as faculty?
out-of-state judges
in-state judges
lawyers
law professors
Dean Gamble
Chief Justice Torbert
other professionals (specify)

c cf lh Suggest speakers you would like to have at workshops.

r cf fl Is there enough variety of presenters?

CT = CONTENT/THEORY VS PRACTICAL
Is the balance between theory and "nuts-and-bolts" practice about right for AJC programs, or should one be emphasized more?

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OA = OUTCOMES/APPLICATIONS
Are handouts provided at programs useful?
Are topics presented in a timely manner to keep personnel current?
Is the information presented at programs useful? What has been most useful?

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OC = OUTCOMES/CREDENTIALS
Have you found the opportunity to earn the 100 hour certificate useful to you professionally?
What problems exit in implementation of the certificate program? (use of NJC courses toward it; use of credit for teaching)

j oc at Should you be able to count attendance, presenting, or serving as faculty advisor at the NJC as credit toward AJC certification? If so, how much? Any limits?

j oc at What is your reaction to the 100-hour certification program?

j oc aa Should there be additional certification programs beyond the 100-hour program?

j oc aa Should teaching in the AJC count toward certification? If so, how much? Any limits?

j oc jc How often should the attendance in NJC specialty courses be financed by AJC?

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OQ = OUTCOMES/QUALITY OF TRAINING

Overall, how is the AJC educational program rated?
What are the best things about the program, overall?
What are the "least good" things about the program, overall?
Are there any "mickey-mouse" things about the program?
Has JC added to your confidence and insight into your job? (secretary)

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OM = OUTCOMES/USEFULNESS OF MATERIALS
Are printed materials provided by AJC valuable and timely? (?)
Usefulness of Tapley's memos and of law updates
Evaluation of bench manuals

a om tb Do you use the outlines and handouts given at the Judicial College workshops.

j om bm Was bench manual helpful to them?